

# HISTORY OF SAATI



## ASSOCIATION'S NAME

South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian

## YEAR ASSOCIATION COMMENCED

1975

## KEY PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION

To promote and advance the teaching of Italian in South Australia

## MAIN FOCUS AREAS

- To be the voice for all teachers of Italian across all sectors across South Australia
- To promote the teaching and learning of Italian, in addition to representing and supporting teachers of Italian to run rich programs

## LEVELS OF CARE AND EDUCATION

- Primary
- Secondary

## HISTORY

SAATI was established on 4th October 1975 by a pioneering group of teachers of Italian who felt the need to come together as an association to promote and advance the teaching of Italian in South Australia. The first General Meeting, on 22nd October 1975 and took place at the South Australian Italian Association premises.

During that meeting, the constitution was approved, and the following inaugural committee was elected:

- President: Ennio Ferraretto
- Vice-President: Prof. G. A. A. Comin
- Secretary: Laura Pieraccini
- Treasurer: Gary Ruggiero
- Editor of Newsletter: Lia Tedesco
- Committee Members: Nick Cavuoto, Nives Zancanaro, Antonietta Cocchiaro, Romano Rubichi, John Pereira

The first newsletter, distributed in November 1975, included the approved constitution, details of the elected committee, and a list of schools known to be teaching Italian at the time. In the early 1980s meetings were held at the premises of il Centro Didattico on Portrush Road.

At that time, Italian was being taught in the following South Australian schools:

- 11 state high schools
- 8 state primary schools
- 13 Catholic secondary schools
- 1 Catholic primary school

During that era of multiculturalism, Italian language programs were growing in schools. A chair had been established for the first time in SA, at Flinders University for Prof. Antonio Comin and one was soon established at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, under the leadership of Romano Rubichi. At the time, teachers were developing programs, but without curricula or resources. All they had were themselves, their students and their families, and each other. SAATI filled a crucial gap.

SAATI began with a handful of members. Over the years the association increased memberships and maintained numbers with over 150 members in 2024 from over 30 secondary schools and 14 primary schools, including members who are relief teachers, university students, university lecturers and retired teachers who are still friends of SAATI.

## **MISSION**

The association mission is and has always been to be the only voice for all teachers of Italian across all sectors across South Australia. SAATI is committed to promoting the teaching and learning of Italian, in addition to representing and supporting teachers of Italian to run rich programs. SAATI has always sought to lead with a contemporary vision of language learning to develop the communication skills of students, bolstered by the development of intercultural capabilities and metacognitive understanding of the practice of communication and what it entails.

SAATI has nurtured and will continue to nurture strong connections across levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) and across government and non-government sectors. The association has also maintained strong relationships with various Italian organisations in SA, inviting their support for various initiatives, as well as with other professional associations in SA and nationally. The relationship that SAATI has with the Consulate is particularly helpful.

## **EARLY KEY INITIATIVES**

Some of the initiatives that SAATI has undertaken over the years include La Bancarella, in the 1980s and 90s, printed booklets full of resources and teaching ideas, that were posted out to members several times a year. Some Committee members and supporters also worked on the first Italian radio program for SA, Radio Paesani, which broadcasted an hour a week of Italian language and culture from its base at the University of Adelaide.

A major project during the 1980s was the South Australia Intercultura Student Exchange Programme with Italy. Organized by a joint committee from SAATI and the Associazione Italia-Australia, in collaboration with the exchange organization Intercultura Roma, the program allowed students to spend some time immersed in Italian life, enhancing language skills and cultural understanding. This initiative also encouraged the growing number of Italian students in South Australia to keep studying the language.

At the time SAATI also supported initiatives to promote bilingual programs in selected Adelaide primary schools which offered Italian. Additionally, in 1984 the Education Department released the long-awaited curriculum resource Pane e Fantasia, which many members began to use in their primary classes.

## **2025: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS**

In 2025, SAATI marks its 50th anniversary as the only organization representing Italian teachers across all sectors in South Australia. The association remains committed to supporting Italian teachers and students by offering:

- financial assistance for Year 12 SACE students to attend revision programs at the School of Languages;
- the opportunity to participate in state language competitions;
- high-quality professional learning opportunities;
- opportunities for Italian Festival movie previews and other cultural events;
- mentoring of Early Career Teachers or teachers new to Italian.

## **CURRENT COMMITTEE (2025)**

- President: Silvia De Cesare
- Vice President: Maria Lucia Di Palo
- Secretary: Lizzy Trasente
- Treasurer: Livia D'Aloia
- Communications Officer: Lydia D'Ambrosio
- Committee Members: David Lepore, Elena Guastella, Grace Gava, Imma De Masi, Manuela Burtini, Monica Guerra, Rocco D'Onofrio, Stefania Chiro

## **PAST PRESIDENTS**

- Prof Antonio Comin – Honorary President
- Ennio Ferraretto OAM, JP
- Margot Ludbrook
- Nives Mercurio (Zancanaro)
- Gianna Zybert
- Lucia Baldino
- Caroline Bamford
- Rosetta Moffa
- Helen Tooulou
- Kathy Bernardi
- Gianna De Leo
- Julie Tarzia / Matthew Absalom
- Belinda Barrile (D'Agostino)
- Gianna De Leo and Antonella Macchia
- Antonella Macchia
- AnnaRita Hoskin
- Maria Kitching
- Maria Kitching/Antonella Macchia
- Silvia De Cesare

SAATI stands as a testament to the dedication of Italian teachers in South Australia. The association has played a key role in promoting the Italian language and culture, supporting educators and students, and fostering a collaborative community. With a 50-year legacy of achievements and a commitment to innovation for many years to come.



### **GET IN TOUCH WITH US!**

[saati.enquiries@gmail.com](mailto:saati.enquiries@gmail.com)

<https://saati.com.au>